

5-6192

1 June 1954

The Honorable Frances P. Bolton
U. S. House of Representatives
Washington 25, D. C.

Dear Frances:

The Viet Minh radio (they now call themselves Northern Vietnam) has given a more complete text of the Genevieve de Galard letter to Ho, and I enclose our transcript of this radio broadcast.

All of this may work out all right but we may not know until we hear what she has to say upon her return to France.

Sincerely,

Allen W. Dulles

Allen W. Dulles
Director

Encl.

AWD:at

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FRENCH NURSE THANKS WOMEN'S UNION

**VIETNAM NEWS AGENCY (DRV), in English Morse to Southeast Asia,
May 26, 1954, 0635 GMT--B**

("French Nurse Thanks Vietnam Women's Union")

(Text)

North Vietnam--Implementing the instruction given by President Ho Chi Minh following the proposal of the Vietnam Women's Union, the VPA High Command released on May 24 the French nurse Genevieve de Galard, who was taken prisoner by the VPA following the liberation of Dien Bien Phu. Before leaving the Vietnam free zones, the French nurse wrote a letter of thanks to the Vietnam Women's Union in which she said:

"I know that following your demand and in conformity with his clement policy, President Ho Chi Minh has permitted me to see again my family and Motherland. My joy is great and I wish to express my thanks to you for having manifested, though not knowing me, your sympathy and amity to me.

"In a few days," she continued, "I will be at home, happy to see my loved ones. I cannot, therefore, refrain from thinking of you all, who due to the war are still living far from your homes and separated from those who are so dear to you. Before leaving your country," Genevieve de Galard added, "I wish to express my ardent hope to see peace reestablished between our two nations so that you will be able to spend a happy life in a peaceful world and with your families, with your parents, husbands, and children." The French nurse concluded by conveying to the Vietnam Women's Union her compliments to French youth.

28 May 1954

The Honorable Frances P. Bolton
U. S. House of Representatives
Washington 25, D. C.

Dear Frances:

Attached are the clippings we discussed.

I understand Bill Tyler of the Department
of State has been in touch with you on this matter.
If anything further arises, I will contact you.

Sincerely yours,



Allen W. Dulles
Director

Attachments

AWD:HEA
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R A D I O R E P O R T S , I N C .

220 EAST 42nd STREET

NEW YORK 17, N. Y.

May 21, 1954

RED RADIO SAYS FRENCH NURSE CONGRATULATES
HO CHI MINH ON HIS BIRTHDAY

CBS World News Round-up at 8:00 A. M. over WCBS (N.Y.) and
the CBS Network:

GUY SEARLS (From Hong Kong): "The Communist Vietminh radio from Indochina, heard here in Hong Kong, broadcast what they claim was an exchange of notes between nurse Genevieve De Gallard, the only woman captured at Dienbienphu, and Ho Chi Minh. According to the Communist propaganda broadcast, the gallant French nurse sent a note of birthday congratulations and wishes for peace to the leader of the Indo-China Communists. In reply, Ho Chi Minh is said to have informed the nurse that she is being released as a war prisoner and in addition reportedly wished her good health and a pleasant journey home. "

Opened Up New Horizons

Nurse Would Relive Glory, Tragedy of Dienbienphu

By Marguerite Higgins

By Wire to the Herald Tribune
Copyright, 1954, The Associated Press

HANOI, French Indo-China, May 25.—France's heroic young nurse, Lt. Genevieve de Galard-Terraube said today she did not regret for an instant her fifty-one days at the fallen fortress of Dienbienphu and would relive them, again, despite all the tragedy, without hesitation. "It was an extraordinary experience," she said. "It brought with it a kind of camaraderie and friendship I had never known before. It opened up for me a whole new series of horizons."

With frankness and composure, the twenty-nine-year-old flight nurse held an hour-long press conference in which she described the hardships and the grandeur of the days and nights this "passed" since she was accidentally trapped in the fortress.

This occurred March 27 when her Red Cross helicopter, the last to reach Dienbienphu, was crippled during the take-off. After that the Communist Viet Minh artillery was so violent that the Dienbienphu airstrip became unusable.

"But I never gave up hope so far as my own personal fate was concerned," she said. "Even

in the terrible last days in May when we knew Dienbienphu would go I felt that I had a reasonable chance of getting out. I was the only woman in the fortress. Why should the Communists want to keep me?" "But when the fortress was falling, weren't you afraid?" she was asked.

"No," the young nurse replied. "Our officers had said that the Viet Minh were regular army forces and that, therefore, they would be correct with us. And this proved true. The Viet Minh were always quite correct."

As for being back in freedom, she repeated that it was an "unimaginable joy" which, however, was mixed with sadness at having been separated from the wounded and the French medical officers with whom she had worked so closely.

Her immediate plans are to remain in Hanoi a few days and then fly to France, where her family is anxiously awaiting her. She would like, if it does not drag out too long, to stay in Indo-China till the last of the wounded have been brought out of Dienbienphu.

Always With the Wounded
She added that she still has hopes that other members of the medical service at Dienbienphu would be released.

Lt. de Galard-Terraube said that until her evacuation yesterday she had remained with the French wounded the entire time except for one fifteen-minute period when some Communist Viet Minh officers ordered her by mistake to join a column of prisoners of war.

"On the last afternoon I learned shortly after midday that we could not hold," she said. "At a little after 5 p. m. when gun after gun was silenced, the doctors and I told the wounded. Many of them cried bitterly at the knowledge that after so much we had lost. But there was a mixture inevitably of relief that the battle was over."

"A few minutes after the last explosions the Communist Viet Minh came down into the trenches (subterranean trenches with mud walls). They were not surprised to see me. They had heard about me, I guess, through the radio and press. In a little while the medical officers and I received orders to join the prisoners of war column. We went into the night. We waited. Then after maybe only fifteen minutes or half an hour the Viet Minh officers came back and said this had been a mistake. They told us we could go back and take care of our people."

Lt. de Galard-Terraube said that for her the most terrible and moving experience was the first huge Viet Minh attack. This occurred March 30, three days after her arrival. "I had never seen such artillery, such

persistence. More and more wounded kept coming."

So far as the myriad offers made to her by various newspapers for the publication of her memoirs, she said she would think them over.

"Have you had any recent offers of marriage?" asked a persistent American reporter.

"Well, you are very indiscreet," laughed the nurse. "But, if you must know, the answer is for the moment no offers of marriage."

After leave in France, Lt. de Galard-Terraube will continue her assignment as flight nurse. Her commission terminates in January, 1955. And after that?

"Ah, after that, who knows?" laughed the young nurse, who had shed the combat trousers and blouse which she was still wearing yesterday and was outfitted in a trim blue uniform. She had indulged in the luxury of a shampoo and hair-set this morning and, despite the wilting effect of Indo-China's tropical climate, looked healthy and refreshed.

Her only mementos of Dienbienphu were several deep scratches around her ankles which were inflicted after the battle was over. They occurred when she tripped over barbed wire zigzagging over the Dienbienphu defense zone.

Sent Greetings to Ho

HANOI, May 25 (A.P.).—Lt. Genevieve de Galard-Terraube disclosed today that the Viet Minh ordered her release from Dienbienphu after she had sent fifty-fourth birthday greetings to Ho Chi Minh, the rebel leader, last Wednesday.

Asked why she had written

him, she replied: "I have nothing to say. I am afraid that why I wrote him will be misunderstood."

Communist radio broadcast quoted her letter as saying:

"On the occasion of May 15 I wish to express my thanks to you, Mr. President, for your clemency toward the wounded prisoners of war at Dienbienphu whom you kindly want to release. . . .

"We all hope that our two countries may exchange friendly relations as early as possible in a world where war will be banned. Should I have the happiness to return to my country I will endeavor to create among the youth around me an atmosphere of full understanding between our two peoples so as to contribute to the maintenance and establishment of peace which we all desire."

Ho's reply expressed thanks for the birthday wish. He said that upon demands of the Viet Minh Women's Union he had issued orders that "you be released at once."

NEW YORK HERALD TRIBUNE
WEDNESDAY, MAY 26, 1954

DYING MEN IN THE MUD-NURSE TELLS ORDEAL

Genevieve Saddened at
Leaving Wounded

Red Cross Medal

OSLO, Norway, May 25 (AP)—The board of governors of the league of Red Cross societies today proposed Lt. Genevieve de Galard Terraube for the Florence Nightingale medal, top award of the Red Cross. The governors sent a Greek-sponsored message to the French nurse, expressing congratulations on the way she cared for the wounded during the siege of Dien Bien Phu. Soviet delegate Dr. B. Pachkov demanded to know "who is this girl de Galardi?" But he voted for the resolution.

HANOI, Indo-China, May 25 (AP)—Genevieve de Galard Terraube, 29, told today the story of her two months ordeal at Dien Bien Phu, then hurried off to a beauty parlor.

"It was the most formidable experience of my life," she said. "It opened new horizons to me of courage and devotion to duty while French soldiers and officers were so brilliantly fighting and dying. I only did my duty."

To a news conference, she gave an indication of the good humor that had brought her thru.

Had she fallen in love or received any proposals at the fortress? First she called the question indiscreet, then she smiled and answered "No."

Gets \$100,000 Offers

At the hairdresser's, Miss de Galard had her chestnut hair set in long waves. Visits to department stores for rouge and lipstick followed. Next week she goes to Paris. Her mother, Mrs. Roger de Galard Terraube, after that will come

time to consider offers of \$100,000 to write her own story. Her commission as a lieutenant in the French air force expires next January.

She was flown into the fortress March 27 to supervise evacuation of wounded. Viet Minh forces attacked the air strip the next day and she could not leave.

"I did not see much of the fighting any of the last deadly assault because always—many times in mud up to my knees—I was working with the wounded," she said.

Tells of Attack

Her worst experience, as she worked in the underground hospital, came the nights of March 30 and 31, she related.

"It was then that the Viet Minh hurled over thousands of mortars and heavy artillery projectiles, and there were hundreds of French wounded and so many dying.

"To me it was so dramatic and tragic, for the wounded had to wait for so many hours in line in the underground bunkers in terrible pain before I could help them.

"Those big attacks in the second mass assault the Viet Minh made upon the fortress caused many casualties. It was the first time I had seen so many wounded at one time. There were so few doctors to help the wounded and I was the only woman nurse there.

"Today I feel a mixture of joy and a little sadness. Joy because I am in Hanoi, sadness because I was ordered to leave

and I had to leave behind so many wounded who needed my help."

Lt. de Galard lived in a tiny, rain filled dugout. She said she had little sleep during the fighting, sometimes only an hour a night.

"All of the sanitary equipment and places for the wounded were in underground bunkers," she said. "All radios had been destroyed in the shelling. And with each terrific barrage there were new problems as to how the wounded could be cared for.

"They had to be shifted from place to place the best we could, laying them on stretchers when they were available, or on the wet or damp ground until some better place could be found.

"How we ever managed to care for the increasing numbers of wounded was in itself a miracle. I think we saved the maximum number of lives. We had not enough blood plasma."

Sent Greetings to Ho

Lt. de Galard said as the situation worsened many officers in the fortress wanted to try to counter-attack to "break out of that hell."

"But the physical state of the men after so many days and nights of constant battle and their extreme fatigue

forced the abandonment of the idea," she said.

Miss De Galard was flown here yesterday. She disclosed that the Viet Minh ordered her release after she had sent 54th birthday greetings to Ho Chi Minh May 19.

Asked why she had written to the Viet Minh leader, she replied: "I have nothing to say. I am afraid that why I wrote him will be misunderstood."

Viet Minh broadcasts quoted her letter as saying:

"On the occasion of May 19, I wish to express my thanks to you, Mr. President, for your clemency toward the wounded prisoners of war at Dien Bien Phu whom you kindly want to release. We all hope that our two countries may exchange friendly relations as early as possible in a world where war will be banned.

"Should I have the happiness to return to my country, I will endeavor to create among the youth around me an atmosphere of full understanding between our two peoples so as to contribute to the maintenance and establishment of peace, which we all desire."

Ho's reply expressed thanks for the birthday wish. He said that upon demands of the Viet Minh's women's union he had issued orders "you be released at once."

Dienbienphu Nurse Recounts Life With Wounded at Fallen Redoubt

**Freed Frenchwoman's Elation Tempered by Sadness at Leaving Comrades—
Note to Ho Chi Minh Kept Secret**

Special to The New York Times

HANOI, Vietnam, May 25— "The nurse of Dienbienphu" said today she had returned to freedom with a feeling of both joy and sadness.

Mlle. Genevieve de Galard Terraube, who became an almost legendary figure for her heroic work among French Union wounded, said she was happy to see her old friends again, but sorry to leave behind the evacuated wounded and doctors and male nurses with whom she worked at Dienbienphu.

Of 858 seriously wounded whom the Vietminh insurgents have agreed to return to French hands, 562 already have been evacuated by air.

The 29-year-old French Air Force nurse, a cheerful round-faced woman with chestnut-colored hair, returned to Hanoi last night after being released by the captors of Dienbienphu. Stranded there on an evacuation mission March 27, Mlle. de Galard Terraube, the only woman among the French garrison, spent forty-one days under siege and seventeen days as a prisoner.

"I had no idea I was famous," she said. She declared that she had received a number of offers to write her experiences at Dienbienphu and laughed when she was asked if she had received any proposals of marriage.

After taking time off this morning for an appointment with a Hanoi hairdresser, she visited the press camp in the company of Gen. Jean Dechaux, commander of the French Air Force in North Vietnam. The recipient of the Legion of Honor First Class and the Croix de Guerre with Palm for her work at Dienbienphu, she appeared at the press conference in a blue cotton uniform without insignia.

She confirmed a Vietminh radio report that she had sent birthday greetings to Ho Chi Minh, the Vietminh president, but said she could not "speak about that" at this time.

When reporters pressed for further details, General Dechaux broke in. He said the military authorities insisted that she would not answer the question.

Mlle. de Galard Terraube called her life at the French redoubt a "wonderful experience," she said. It had "opened new horizons and that the camaraderie was wonderful."

Asked what had been the single most dramatic moment for her at Dienbienphu, she replied: "For me it was March 30 during the first Vietminh attack. The artillery was extraordinarily heavy. It was the first time I had seen so many wounded. So many were also obliged to wait for treatment. It was dreadful."

Vignettes of life at Dienbienphu were projected by Mlle. de Galard Terraube in rapid French.

The calmness of Brig. Gen. Christian de Castries, French garrison commander, and the incessant Vietminh artillery fire and periodic Vietminh assaults; the carving out of stars for General de Castries from beer cans when he was promoted to brigadier general; mud and more mud everywhere, with a shortage of blood and plasma for the wounded, and the wounded living in damp underground shelters, shaken by artillery fire and into which the rain seeped constantly.

She recalled an occasion for celebration one midnight in mid-April after a French pilot bailed out of his disabled fighter plane and managed to get his parachute open just about fifty yards off the ground. He landed outside the Dienbienphu perimeter,

and a French patrol rescued him. "We had champagne that night," she said.

She depicted a more somber scene on the morning of May 7, the day when the French redoubt was overwhelmed by the insurgents. That morning, General de Castries summoned the commanders of all positions left in French hands to discuss the question of an attempt to break out.

Some, she said, were in favor, but the majority voted against it on the ground that the troops were too tired and the odds too unfavorable. It was decided to fight until the ammunition was gone, then destroy the equipment and surrender.

At noon Vietminh troops broke into the underground hospital where she was working among the wounded.

According to the nurse, the X-ray equipment at Dienbienphu was destroyed by artillery fire, but the water filter system held up until the end. She said blood and blood plasma along with ice to preserve it had been in short supply.

She said she was planning to leave Hanoi in a few days and return to Paris to join her mother, Viscountess Oger de Galard Terraube and her sister, Marie-Suzanne. She said her present tour of duty in the Air Force nursing service would end next Jan. 15th but added that she might decide to re-enlist.

MAY 26 1954

Nurse Lauds Dien Bien Phu Defenders

By Larry Allen

HANOI, May 25 (AP)—Genevieve de Galard Terraube declared today that tending French wounded in 40 terror-filled nights and days in the fortress of Dien Bien Phu was the "most formidable experience of my life."

"It opened new horizons to me of courage and devotion to duty while French soldiers and officers were so brilliantly fighting and dying."

"I only did my duty."

She asserted the most "dangerous and dramatic moment" of the long, savage battle for the French Union fortress in North western Indochina's jungles came on the night of March 30.

"It was then that the Vietminh hurled over thousands of mortars and heavy artillery projectiles and there were hundreds of French wounded and so many dying."

"To me it was so dramatic and tragic, for so many of the

wounded had to wait for so many hours in line in the underground bunkers in terrible pain before I could help them.

"Today I feel a mixture of joy and a little sadness. Why? Because I am in Hanoi. Sadness, because I was ordered to leave and I had to leave behind so many wounded and people who worked with me and who needed my help."

Will Return to Paris

The blue-eyed, 29-year-old nurse arrived in Hanoi yesterday after being released from the captured bastion by her Communist-led captors. Like the wounded being shuttled out from Dien Bien Phu, she was flown first to Luang Prabang, then ferried here by Dakota transport.

She said she planned to return to her home in Paris "within a few days to see my family and for a rest."

Here is the story of her heroic work in the rain-soaked and mud-filled trenches and bunkers of the Dien Bien Phu battlefield:

"I was ordered to fly into Dien Bien Phu on the evening of March 26 and to fly out the next day with a report on the wounded there and their evacuation."

"But on that morning of March 27 the Vietminh, in preparation for their second big attack that was coming in a few days, opened intense mortar and artillery fire upon the main airstrip for the fortress."

"It was impossible for any plane to leave and take me back to Hanoi."

The shelling kept up until the rebels seized the fortress. No planes took off or landed. All supplies thereafter were dropped by parachute.

Lieut. De Galard lived in a tiny, rain-filled dugout. She said she had little sleep during the ensuing fighting—sometimes only an hour a night.

Not Enough Plasma

"All of the sanitary equipment and places for the wounded were in underground bunkers," she said.

"And with each terrific barrage there were new problems to be cared for."

"They had to be shifted from place to place the best we could, during the night."

available, or on the wet or damp ground until some better place could be found.

"How we ever managed to care for the increasing numbers of wounded was in itself a miracle."

"I think we saved the maximum number of lives. We had not enough blood plasma."

Lieut. De Galard said officers in the fortress wanted to try to counterattack en masse to "break out of that hell."

"But the physical state of the men after so many days and nights of constant battle and their extreme fatigue forced the abandonment of the idea," she said.

The nurse admitted she wrote a letter containing "birthday greetings" to Vietminh Leader Ho Chi Minh, who was 54 May 9, from one of the tents where she tended French Union wounded.

Ordered Her Release

In reply, Ho Chi Minh ordered her "immediate liberation."

The Peiping radio told the world of that exchange.

Asked why she had written to Ho, the nurse said, "I have nothing to say. I am afraid that why I wrote to him would be misunderstood."

She spoke of the French commander of the fortress, Brig. Gen. Christian de Castries, declaring he was "very calm and confident" right up to the time the Vietminh stormed into his own command post.

"I know that he is a prisoner of the Vietminh, but I do not know where he is," she said.

Lieutenant de Galard was smiling broadly last night when she first landed in Luang Prabang. Sister nurses crowded about, weeping with excitement to embrace her. Comforting them, she said:

"All right. Don't cry. It was not that bad at all. Everything is quite all right."

She embraced the nurses and kissed the top French officers in charge of the Luang Prabang airstrip. After refreshments she flew on to Hanoi.

At the meeting of the League of Red Cross Societies at Oslo, Norway, Greece proposed yesterday that the board of "congratulations" to the nurse. A Greek delegate said she had

"shown herself worthy of the example set by Florence Nightingale."